

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost      July 19, 2020

**Collect:** ALMIGHTY GOD, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking. Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Lessons:** Isaiah 44:6-8

Psalm 86:11-17

Romans 8:12-25

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

**Sermon:** In today's Gospel lesson Jesus is again preaching to the crowd. He is trying to explain what the kingdom of heaven is like. He is using a parable a short story with a point showing a situation the people are familiar with, the planting of seeds.

Jesus tells the story of someone who sows good seed into his fields, but as the seeds grow weeds also begin to grow among the good seeds. Knowing that he planted seeds that were free of weeds, he assumes that someone, an enemy, had sown weeds into his fields.

The farmworkers want to know if he wants them to pull the weeds out. He tells them no. He is afraid that they might also pull out some of the good young plants. He tells them to let the weeds continue to grow and when it is time for harvest it will be easier to distinguish the weeds from the good plants. At that time, they could gather the weeds and burn them leaving only the good seed to be harvested and put into his barn

In this parable the man who sows the seed is God and people are the seeds being sown into the field which is the world. The barn of course is heaven.

Jesus is telling the people that God puts people into the world and he wants them to be good and flourish and at the end of their lives he will gather them into heaven. But at times evil or bad mixes in with the good people. The question then is asked what to do about it.

Should someone try to handle the situation right away and get rid of the bad people? Jesus says no, he knows sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the good from the bad. He tells them to let them live and continue to grow and at the right time it will be easier to decide who is the good person and who is the bad person.

In looking at plants their lives are simple, they are planted, they grow, if they are weeds, they remain weeds, and if they are good plants at the time of the harvest they will still be good plants. Then it will be easier to destroy the weeds without harming the good plants.

If we look at this story with the eyes of people today, there will be changes that affect the outcome. We will introduce salvation. We will want to work with that bad seed/the bad people and save them. We will try to show them the things they need to do to become good people. We will nurture them and reassure them that GOD LOVES THEM. We will share the stories of our lives and experiences with them. We will support them as they begin their journey of redemption.

We will let them know that even in the best of times good or evil can interfere and cause problems. When these problems occur, good people don't give up or run away they bear down, fight harder to do right, and they will overcome the problem.

As we live, we know bad things can happen at anytime to cause problems. These things can be large, small or just irritants and they can occur at anytime or place.

Let me share an experience some of the older members of St. Matthew's may remember: *One Sunday, St. Matthew's went up to Mount Charleston to have a picnic and eucharist on the mountain. This is when Father Michael Garrison was celebrating at St. Matthew's (He has since gone on to be the Bishop of the Diocese of Western New York and is now retired living in*

*Florida). The day was a good day, there on the mountain we had the eucharist, began to eat and just enjoy ourselves. Suddenly, the sky turned dark, there was thunder, lightning, rain and hail in just a few short minutes. It got so bad that we decided we had to pack up and get off that mountain. We evacuated back down into Las Vegas where it was a pretty sunshiny day.*

Now we didn't just run away, we evaluated and decided it was safer to be off that mountain!

And so, it will be for the rest of our lives, bad things might interfere, but we will have learned how to identify and deal with them.

In our lives, God offers us salvation enabling us to deal with the bad and yet become or remain good people that can be gathered into his barn: heaven.

Amen